



FHA Updated Online Handbooks 4155.1 and 4155.2 – Q&As

On April 21 2009, FHA will launch two updated online handbooks, *Mortgage Credit Analysis for Mortgage Insurance, One to Four Family Property (4155.1)* and *Lender's Guide to Single Family Mortgage Insurance Processing, (4155.2)*. Below are questions and answers that address the implementation and launch of the updated online handbooks that will assist you in becoming familiar in working with the new online handbook environment.

The New Online Handbook Environment

1. What are online handbooks?

The updated online handbooks contain the policy and procedural information that was previously compiled in four other handbooks; 4000.2, 4000.4, 4165.1 and 4155.1. The information from these four handbooks has been moved to an online portal, making content easy to search for and find, and providing greater clarity and understanding of FHA policies for handbook users.

2. What is new?

The updated handbooks will be presented in a new organizational format online at www.fha.gov and www.hud.gov. FHA has assembled all relevant content in an online portal that will be easy to navigate and search for using the search engine feature of the online portal. FHA has also rewritten the handbooks using simple English to make policies and procedures easier for handbook users to understand and communicate FHA policies.

3. What is the same?

There is no new policy information in the updated online handbooks. FHA has created two handbooks from content that was previously housed in four different handbooks on HUDCLIPS. The content is now consolidated into the updated handbooks to eliminate redundancies and ensure that the updated handbooks are more concise.

4. What information will I find in 4155.1

The *Mortgage Credit Analysis for Mortgage Insurance, One to Four Family Properties (4155.1)* is a revision of the previous HUDCLIPS version of 4155.1. The updated 4155.1, incorporates Mortgagee Letters that have impacted the handbook since its last release in 2003. The language and organization of the content has been simplified to create a handbook that is more concise and easy to use.

5. What information will I find in 4155.2

The *Lender's Guide to Single Family Mortgage Insurance Processing* handbook introduces a new handbook, though the content is not new. This handbook consolidates policy information from 4000.2, 4000.6, 4165.1 and 4155.1 into a single source. There are no new policies or procedures in this handbook that you have not previously seen in the other handbooks on HUDCLIPS.

6. Why is FHA updating these handbooks?

FHA has undertaken a number of initiatives in order to align with industry standards. Over the years FHA has conducted several studies with industry participants to find ways in which it could enhance FHA programs and materials. Many lenders have expressed their frustration with FHA's handbooks, stating that they are hard to use and maintain. The process of updating the handbooks with Mortgagee Letters can be cumbersome for lenders, they want access to



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handbooks that are updated more frequently, easier to use, and easier to understand. This initiative responds to the lenders' need to access clear, accurate and timely information, and will serve to align FHA more closely with industry standards, increasing customer satisfaction.

7. Are these the only handbooks that will be updated?

Eventually many other FHA Single Family handbooks will be updated to an online format. The *Mortgage Credit Analysis for Mortgage Insurance*, *One to Four Family Property* and *Lender's Guide to Single Family Mortgage Insurance Processing* will be the first two of the updated handbooks that will be launched online.

8. Will FHA convert more handbooks to this format?

FHA is in the process of updating many of their Single Family handbooks using the Information Mapping format. Eventually the policies and procedures from the Single Family handbooks will be housed in one single online repository.

9. When will the new handbooks be available?

To ease the transition to the online format, the updated online handbooks 4155.1 and 4155.2 will be available for informational purposes only beginning on April 21, 2009 through May 10, 2009. They will become effective beginning on May 11, 2009.

10. What will the organizational structure and layout of these handbooks look like?

The information has been reorganized and mapped so that it is easier to read and scan for specific information. Each page will include the title of the section, and chapter. On the left hand side of the page paragraph names are listed so they are easier to scan. To the right of the paragraph name is the corresponding "block" or paragraph of information.

Much of the information will be presented in a bulleted list or table depending on the content. The information has been rewritten and reorganized so that it is easier to read and interpret.

11. Can I still access the old handbook?

Yes, Handbooks 4155.1 REV-5, 4000.2 REV-3, 4000.4 REV-1 and 4165.1 REV-2 will remain in effect through May 10, 2009. Beginning on May 11, 2009, access to the PDF versions of the old handbooks will be available on HUDCLIPS for reference only, and lenders will be expected to originate new loans using FHA policy in the online updated handbooks.

Using the Online Portal – Online Features, Functions and System Requirements

1. How can I access the online handbooks?

The online handbooks can be accessed at www.fha.gov. Click on the link for Lenders. To the left of the screen you will then see a box labeled Current Hot Topics. Within this box you will see a link labeled "Updated Online FHA Handbooks: 4155.1 & 4155.2". Click on this link and it will take you to the online portal. You will not need to download any additional software or programs in order to access these handbooks. The minimum system requirements for accessing the portal are:

- Internet Explorer 6.0
- Firefox 3.0



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2. How can I print sections of the handbooks?

You can print the Handbook Chapters. Individual Topics are not available to print, unless you utilize the Print function of your Browser.

3. How do the print and online versions of the handbooks differ?

There is no difference between the online version of the handbooks and the version that will print. The print version of the handbooks preserves the same organization of the online version so when you want to reference something you use online, it will be found in the same location in the print format.

4. Can I bookmark or save a section I frequently use?

All the information in the online portal will be segmented into blocks of information. At the end of each block there will be links with icons. One link and icon will be the “Bookmark”. Clicking on this icon will allow you to save the section you are viewing to a location of your choice.

5. How do I email a section of the handbook?

The portal offers a feature to email FHA. By clicking on *Get Help*, your email application will open a new window. In the *subject* field you will find the topic ID you were viewing. In the *To:* field, the email application will automatically generate the email address of an FHA employee who can answer your questions. This function does not allow you to email a section of the handbook, however; you can email the ID of the content that you are referring to an FHA employee or a recipient of your own choice.

Currently there is no email function on the online portal that will allow you to directly email a block to an outside recipient. However, you can email a copy of the block you are viewing by copying and pasting the block into your email application or copying and pasting the URL (web address) into the body of your email.

6. Are searches saved? Can I view my search history?

Searches are not saved as part of the system; however, using the bookmark feature you can save a specific block or topic to your favorite places.

7. How do I search for specific content within the handbook?

There are two ways to search within the online portal. One option is to do a *Quick Search*. If you would like to return results for a specific topic, type the topic/words **with quotations** (i.e.: “borrower eligibility”) in the *Quick Search* field, and click *Go*. This search will only return results that contain the exact words you searched for. This search function is best used to conduct searches of multiple words. To conduct a general search you can enter a general search term (i.e. ARM) into the *Quick Search* box and click on *Go*. This search function is best used for one word searches. **Do not use any hyphens, symbols or numbers in any of your searches; this will not produce any results.**

Another option is using the index feature. If you click on Index, which is located at the bottom of the *Contents* bar on the left, it will allow you to search for topics/keywords, while narrowing



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your search by information type, or the location of the material. Using this function, you can also choose to display your results alphabetically or by design.

Policy Changes and Future Handbook Updates

1. Is there any new policy information in these handbooks?

The updated handbooks do not contain any new policy or procedural information. All of the policy information that is included in the updated handbooks is either information that was in the previous handbooks or is information that has been updated to reflect changes announced by Mortgagee Letters since the last revision of the handbook.

2. Will FHA continue to use Mortgagee Letters to announce policy updates?

FHA will continue to use Mortgagee Letters to announce policy updates. Eventually Mortgagee Letters will be redesigned using the Information Mapping format so they align with the organization and design of the updated handbooks.

3. How soon will FHA update the handbooks as policy change is communicated?

FHA will make changes to the content of the updated handbooks on the effective date of the policy changes that are announced via Mortgagee Letters. This will ensure that you are always working with the most up-to-date material and information.

4. How will I know what information or sections have been updated?

After each section of the updated handbook is a section called “Change Date”. This section will indicate the last time this section or block of the handbook was updated.

5. How can I find the policy change in the updated handbooks?

When a policy change is made it will be announced in a Mortgagee Letter. This Mortgagee Letter will be posted to the portal under the “Updates” tab. Under the Mortgagee Letter on the Updates tab will be links to locations in the handbook that have been impacted by the Mortgagee Letter. You can click on these links to go directly to the updated handbook information in the online portal.

Resources and Contact Information

1. Who do I contact if I cannot access the handbooks or find the information I’m looking for?

You can find more answers to your questions using the FHA resource center or by accessing the FHA Knowledge Base at <http://www.fhaoutreach.gov/FHAFAQ/>. The FHA resource center accepts calls at 1-800-CALLFHA (225-5342) from Monday-Friday, 8 am to 8 pm ET. The Knowledge Base can be accessed 24/7 and provides answers for over 1000 frequently asked questions. You may also email your questions to: info@fhaoutreach.com



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2. Are there any trainings or tutorials available on how to use the updated online handbooks?

Once the Handbooks are rolled out, there will be a live webinar training on how to use the updated handbooks. This webinar training will be recorded and posted on fha.gov where it can be accessed 24/7.